

In Memoriam
Frank Dan Waterman

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

FRANK DAN WATERMAN was born at Altorf, Illinois, on July 20, 1869, the son of Elisha S. and Delia Robinson Waterman. As a young man, his father had moved to Illinois from Decatur, New York, where the family had lived since Revolutionary War days. He was descended from the earliest settlers of America, the first Waterman in this country, Thomas, having come to Massachusetts in 1635. Some member of his family has served in every war in which the country has fought.

When Frank Waterman was a youth, his family moved to Kankakee, Illinois, a few miles from Altorf, and Mr. Waterman always regarded Kankakee as his home town. On June 8, 1935, he was a guest of honor at a community celebration in Kankakee at which a park was dedicated and named Waterman Park.

The oldest son, he was compelled to go to work at the age of fourteen when his father died. After holding several minor jobs, he entered the law office of W. R. Hunter. A legal career did not attract him, but the employment in Mr. Hunter's office was of major importance, for there he studied shorthand and developed his keen interest in creating fine writing tools. After a year in the law office, he yielded to the lure of the West, going to Pueblo, Colorado, where he took a job soliciting orders for a tailor's shop—his first selling experience.

After a short stay in Colorado, young Waterman's uncle, Lewis Edson Waterman, who invented the fountain pen and founded the L. E. Waterman Company, invited him to enter the business. This was in 1888, four years after the business was established. Frank was given the entire West as his sales territory, and made his headquarters in Chicago to be near his mother.

The young salesman scored one of the major business coups of his early career when he engaged a booth at the Chicago World's Fair and personally demonstrated the Waterman Ideal Pen to thousands of persons, not only selling pens to individual customers but interesting dealers from all parts of the country.

After the World's Fair he was promoted to the New York offices of the company, which at that time were located in a basement space in lower Broadway, having been moved there from the rear of a cigar store on Fulton Street.

When L. E. Waterman died in 1901, it was found that his will

directed that Frank D. Waterman continue its management. Under his direction, the business expanded rapidly. Mr. Waterman built new plants, sent expeditions to Siberia and the Far East to gather iridium for his pens, imported rubber from South America to make his own pen barrels, and reorganized the sales division. He took a leading part in improving the fountain pen, maintaining laboratories for constant research and experimentation. Despite the demands upon his time resulting from his varied activities and responsibilities, he remained in sole command of the foreign end of the business, which he founded, establishing an agency in London, founding a factory in St. Lambert, Canada, and developing sales outlets throughout the civilized world. When he became president of the firm, it had 26 employees. It is now a world-wide organization, employing more than 2000 people.

Mr. Waterman always had a deep interest in civic affairs and was active in merchants' associations and business organizations, but the general public knew little of him until the World War. When America entered the War, he volunteered to help in all war movements where his services could be used. He was chosen by the Treasury Department to be chairman of the War Savings Committee of Manhattan. Enrolling Minute Men, organizing neighborhood rallies and parades, he conducted an energetic drive which resulted in the collection of hundreds of millions of dollars in the New York area.

His greatest opportunity for public service to the city came in 1923, when he was asked to head the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand, which urged the building of much needed subways. With the slogan, "Say It With Shovels," 160,000 men and women signed a petition asking for increased subway facilities, forcing the city administration to take action.

As a result of this campaign, he was asked to accept the Republican Party's nomination for Mayor of New York in 1925. He accepted, with the understanding that the campaign should be based largely on the failure of the Democratic Party to provide adequate subway facilities and on the importance of giving the city a business rather than a political administration.

Representing a party that was hopelessly in the minority and opposing an experienced politician, Mr. Waterman was defeated. Concerning this campaign, the New York Herald-Tribune said: "Mr. Waterman ran against terrific odds. He was not a forceful

speaker, because all of his experience had been with personal, individual contacts. He stood upon his obvious sincerity and his business ability, but his lack of knowledge of professional politics contributed to his defeat." Mr. Waterman was never interested in politics as such, and after the campaign he returned to his business interests.

Mr. Waterman traveled widely, circling the globe in 1928, and had friends in every part of the world. He was a member of the American Industrial Mission to Mexico in 1924 and a delegate to the International Chamber of Commerce convention in Stockholm in 1927. For many years he spent his winters in Eustis, Florida, and in 1935 gave that city its first airplane landing field. He belonged to numerous organizations, including the Union League Club, the Lotos Club, the Congressional Country Club of Washington, the Circumnavigators' Club, the Broadway Association, the Canadian Club of New York, the English Speaking Union, the Pilgrims, the National Society of Puritan Descendants, the Economic Club, the National Stationers Association, the Rotary Club of New York, the Japan Society and the Italy-America Society, the Citizens Union of the City of New York, the National Association of Audubon Societies, various Chambers of Commerce, and Chancellor Walworth Lodge, F. and A. M.

He died of pneumonia on May 6, 1938, at 7 A. M. at his home, 655 Park Avenue, New York City, after being in poor health for a year. He was survived by his wife, the former Helen Louise Huson, whom he married on February 16, 1898, and by two sons, Elisha Huson Waterman and Frank Dan Waterman, Jr.

Funeral services were held on May 9th in St. James Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City. The services were conducted jointly by Rev. James A. Paul, assistant rector, and the Rev. Victor W. Mori, rector of Grace Church in Madison, New Jersey, where Mr. Waterman was formerly a member. Honorary pallbearers were Judge Mortimer W. Byers, Judge Walter H. Evans, Charles Evans Hughes, Jr., Julius G. Day, Frank L. Mulholland, Walter Randall, William Gettinger, Douglas R. Henderson, James P. Gillies, Richard A. Benoy and Edward J. Kastner. The burial took place in Ferncliff Mausoleum, Hartsdale, New York. All offices and plants of the company in the United States, Canada and Europe were closed on the day of the funeral.

*A Tribute to the Human Side of the Late
Frank D. Waterman*

by Fred P. Seymour

As a lover of the thought—"Only God can make a tree," I like also to reflect that "The mighty oak from a little acorn grows." In the sad ending of thirty-seven years of close personal friendship with Frank Waterman, I would like in these few lines, to express what I hope may be considered as a tribute to his character and to the human side of his life and its development from the acorn stage.

Frank's genuine love for his fellow man grew constantly with his career. At no time was any personal matter of friend, associate, or often a total stranger with troubled mind too small for his thoughtful consideration. His advice was widely sought and freely given. His helpfulness to many people all over his native country and many in foreign countries was almost beyond comprehension. In fact, I am sure that no one person will ever know of any major portion of his benefactions.

Typically, I knew of a widow and daughter who survived the Lusitania catastrophe after losing father and fortune with the ship, who through Frank, his family, and his encouragement to Churches, Organizations, and others, were restored in this their adopted country to independence and comfortable lives although he had never heard of the people before.

Having a happy home, he desired always to help others build in the same way. He was a lover of children and desired always to make their lives happier as a result of his friendship and continuing thoughtfulness. He helped to build and improve towns and surrounding communities wherever his interests happened to take him.

Again typically, when a postmaster was running behind requirements in the sale of postage stamps, he would accumulate orders from business friends, buy their stamps at his local post office, and deliver them personally to help out. Boxes of oranges would be delivered from his Florida grove to sick rooms in Colorado, Illinois, and other places when and where least expected and always with kind cheerful messages. Faithful postmen and policemen were rewarded and remembered frequently in personal and kindly ways.

As might be expected from a man as human as Frank, those close to him in business and family life were at the center of his thoughts. To me it was most refreshing that until his last days, he continued

to love what many consider the old-fashioned school of remembering birthdays and the parties that went with them, and large family gatherings at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and anniversaries.

The pressure of the leadership of an international organization frequently tends to lead away from those simple and healthy tendencies of a man's life. Frank ever was full of fun and humor. He always enjoyed jokes on others and enjoyed them even more if he could be the one to initiate the joke. It was real happiness to him when someone could put over a good joke on him. He also loved simplicity. I never knew in all my years of friendship of any time when he was lacking in patriotism or failing to support a patriotic cause.

His mother, who lived almost as long as did Frank, was almost equal to a shrine to him. Frank was a tireless worker in business and in those causes outside of his business which attracted his interest. The outdoors was his playground.

Like all humans, Frank made mistakes but I think that anyone who knew him well enough would always admit that he was big enough to admit his mistakes when they were discovered.

In his generous gifts of time and means to the advancement of medical science and public health, Frank Waterman built monuments that will live for generations after him; thousands of persons who are not yet born will have medical care because of his generosity. He served Flower Hospital, in New York City, from 1926 to 1931. During most of that period he was chairman of the Board of Trustees. In 1927 he directed a campaign which raised \$43,000 to wipe out an indebtedness which had been incurred the previous year to provide free care for the needy, and in 1929 he had a major part in the drive which raised a half million dollars for a new building. Another notable contribution toward the health of our people was his gift of Fountain Inn, a large hotel with spacious grounds at Eustis, Fla., to the Lake County Medical Association. The hotel has been made into one of the finest general hospitals in Florida.

I suppose one of the happiest moments of Frank's life was his return to Kankakee, Illinois, for the dedication of the park which the city named Waterman Park in his honor. Frank never lost contact with his boyhood friends in Kankakee, or interest in the progress of the city, and I know how pleased he was by this demonstration of his old town's affection for him.

I believe that Frank Waterman's humanities were as outstanding as was his ability to make the name "Waterman" internationally synonymous with fountain pens.

A Useful Citizen

(Editorial in the New York Herald Tribune, May 7, 1938)

THAT municipal campaign of 1925, when Frank D. Waterman was the Republican candidate for Mayor against the Democrat James J. Walker, seems a long time ago. The face of the city has been changed since then, as, indeed, has the face of the nation. That big boom that was gathering momentum in 1925, the collapse of 1929, the Seabury investigation which led to the downfall of Walker and eventually to a genuine new deal in the city government, the passing of prohibition—these are only a few of the historic events of those embattled years. After his defeat by the glib and politically wise Walker, Mr. Waterman went back to his business of manufacturing and distributing fountain pens. It was simply not in the cards that he could have been elected Mayor in 1925, even if he had been endowed with an eloquence and a political acumen which he did not possess. His pleas for sound administration, as well as his attacks on Tammany, were almost wholly ineffectual. But Mr. Waterman, whose slogan, "Say It With Shovels," caused a speeding up of subway construction and made him available for the race for Mayor, did not lose the respect of his fellow citizens by his defeat. He was given to little acts of kindness . . . which enhanced his attractiveness. His death yesterday brings general regret.

Resolution passed by

National Stationers Association

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Stationers Association hereby records its sorrow at the passing of the late Frank D. Waterman, a useful citizen and a distinguished member of this organization and industry; that the memory of this good man may be perpetually inscribed upon our records as it will be in the hearts of his friends. He came among us, he served well, he has passed away and we shall miss him.

Resolution passed by the
Broadway Association, Inc.

WHEREAS, the officers and members of the Broadway Association have learned with deep regret of the passing of their beloved fellow member, FRANK D. WATERMAN, and

WHEREAS, he rose by diligence, perseverance and integrity to a leading place in the business life of our city, giving unstintedly of his time and efforts to public service within our city and throughout the country, thus endearing himself in the hearts of his many friends and admirers, and

WHEREAS, he was a long time member of the Broadway Association, serving on the Board of Directors, during which time he furthered the usefulness of the Association in its efforts to constructively serve the community, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of the Broadway Association, in regular meeting assembled, that we spread upon our records acknowledgment of our esteem and indebtedness to FRANK D. WATERMAN and that the profound sympathy and condolence of the Broadway Association be extended to his family and business associates.

BROADWAY ASSOCIATION, Inc.

Dr. John A. Harriss, President.

Attest:

J. B. Vandever, Secretary.

Many other tributes—testifying as to the general esteem and affection in which Mr. Waterman was held—have been received from associations and friends all over the world. It is regretted that lack of space prevents them being shown here.